

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 GABORO 00001 021432Z

ACTION AF-04

INFO OCT-01 SS-14 ISO-00 SSO-00 EUR-08 EA-06 NSC-05 NSCE-00

PM-03 INR-05 CIAE-00 DODE-00 L-01 SP-02 ACDA-10

INRE-00 SAJ-01 MC-01 IO-06 TRSE-00 /067 W

-----021440Z 049730 /42

O R 021300Z JAN 77

FM AMEMBASSY GABORONE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC NIACT IMMEDIATE 9203

INFO AMEMBASSY LUSAKA

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

AMEMBASSY LONDON

S E C R E T GABORONE 0001

LIMDIS

PRETORIA FOR DEPUTY ASST SEC EDMONDSON

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: MASS, PFOR, BC, CH, RH

SUBJECT: PRC ARMS ARRIVE BOTSWANA

REF: GABORONE 2386

1. SUMMARY: TWO MILITARY AIRCRAFT ARRIVED GABORONE AIRPORT
JAN 2. OBSERVERS AGREE THAT CARGO WHICH WAS UNLOADED AMIDST UNUSUAL
SECURITY PRECAUTIONS, WAS EXPECTED ARMS SHIPMENT FROM PRC (GABORONE
2386). DETAILED BACKGROUND ON GOB DECISION WAS PROVIDED EARLIER
AT JANUARY 1 RECEPTION BY UK NATIONAL FORMERLY IN CHARGE OF
POLICE TRAINING IN BOTSWANA. END SUMMARY.

2. TWO CARIBOU AIRCRAFT WITH MILITARY MARKINS IDENTIFIED AS
ZAMBIAN AIR FORCE ARRIVED GABORONE AIRPORT ABOUT 10AM. TODAY
JANUARY 2. SEVERAL DOZEN POLICE MOBILE UNIT (PMU) ARMED WITH
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SECRET

PAGE 02 GABORO 00001 021432Z

MACHINE GUNS SURROUNDED AIRCRAFT PARKED IN A FAR CORNER.

PMU KEPT CURIOUS ONLOOKERS AT A DISTANCE.

TRUCKS WITH FLAT-BOTTON TRAILERS CAME ALONG SIDE AND CRATES
ONLOADED. AMONG EARLY ONLOOKERS OBSERVED BY US AND UK COLLEAGUES
(ATTRACTED TO AIRPORT BY UNUSUAL SUNDAY MORNING ARRIVAL) WERE TWO
PRC EMBOFFS. IN BRIEF CIRCUMSTANTIAL EVIDONCE LEAVES LITTLE DOUBT
THAT CARGO WAS ARMS FROM PRC.

3. REINFORCING THIS CONCLUSION WAS FORTUITOUS MEETING AT JAN 1. RECEPTION WITH MIKE BAUGH, UK NATIONAL AND FORMERLY IN CHARGE OF ALL POLICY TRAINING IN BOTSWANA. HE SOUGHT ME OUT AND PROVIDED DETAILED ON GOB DECISION. HE OPENED BY COMMENTING THAT GOB IS CALCULATING OVERALL COST OF PRM BUILDUP AT \$20 MILLION BUT COST OF ARMS WOULDDBE NOTHING "BECAUSE THEY COME FROM PRC". HE OUTLINED PRINCIPAL STEPS IN REQUISITION OF PRC ARMS AS FOLLOWS: (A) PRESIDENT KHAMA VISITED PRC LAST SUMMER ACCOMPANIED INTER ALIA BY POLICE OFFICIALS AND SON IAN KHAMA WHO IS A CLOSE FRIEND OF BAUGH'S; (B) IAN KHAMA HAS LONG BEEN OUTSPOKEN IN HIS PREFERENCE FOR PMU ORGANIZATION AND COMMAND STRUCTURE SEPARATE FROM BOTSWANA POLICE NOT HAS HE CONCEALED FROM BAUGH HIS DESIRE TO ARM PMU WITH PRC WEAPONS. (BAUGH DESCRIBES IAN KHAMA AS POLITICALLY IMMATURE BUT ANBITIOUS FOR PRESTIGE OF HIS OWN COMMAND); (C) LAST OCTOBER GOB RECEIVED SELECTION OF PRC ARMS FOR TESTING, WHICH GAUGH WAS TOLD HE COULD NOT WITNESS. SAME MONTH BAUGH WAS DISMISSED FROM ALL TRAINING RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PMU. ANOTHER UK ADVISOR WAS SIMULTANEOUSLY REMOVED FROM PMU ADVISORY ROLE; (D) GOB DEPUTY POLICE COMMISSIONER WAS SENT TO DAR ES SALAAM SEVERAL WEEKS AGO TO SUPERVISORY "DELIVERY" OF PRC WEAPONS ARRIVING BY SHIP FOR FORWARDED TO GABORONE BY ZAMBIAN MILITARY AIRCRAFT "IN ORDER NOT TO ATTRACT ATTENTION".

4. BAUGH REFLECTED ON IMPLICATIONS OF GOB DECISION WHICH AS INDICATED ALONE HE ATTRIBUTED IN LARGE MEASURE TO INFLUENCE OF IAN KHAMA AND TO "RAPID DETERIORATION" OF THE SITUATION ON RHODESIAN FRONTIER OVER PAST FEW MONTHS. HE DEPLORED GOB EFFORT TO EXPAND PMU RAPIDLY TO 1000 MEN (FROM PRESENT 300), HE NOTED INITIAL
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PAGE 03 GABORO 00001 021432Z

GOAL IS TO INCREASE PMU BY 200 IN THE NEXT 30 DAYS. TO DO SO HE SAID, WOULD MEAN REDUCING ENTRANCE REQUIREMENTS TO SIMPLY PASSING A PHYSICAL EXAM. HE SHUDDERED TO CONSEQUENCE OF PUTTING RIFLES, TO SAY NOTHING OF MORE SOPHISTICATED ARMS, IN HANDS OF UNEDUCATED, UNTRAINED PERSONS MOST OF WHOM WOULD HAVE ONLY A WEEK'S TRAINING.

5. COMMENT: UNUSUAL SECRECY WITH WHICH GOB HAS SURROUNDED THIS AFFAIR INDICATES SOME SENSITIVITY TO INEVITABLE REPERCUSSIONS THAT WILL FOLLOW AS FACTS BECOME KNOWN. WE WOULD APPRECIATE ANY PRELIMINARY GUIDANCE DEPARTMENT MIGHT WISH TO PROVIDE FOR REPLYING TO ANTICIPATED INQUIRIES FROM GOB OFFICIALS.
NORLAND

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NNN

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